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Ann Belleman
Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office
Public Comments Processing
ATTN: FWS-R6-ES-2010-0047
Division of Policy and Directives
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Ms. Belleman:

This letter and the attached executive summary represent our response to the 12-month status review and request for information regarding whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*). This information summarizes the status of the species in Region 1 of the USDA Forest Service, and provides an overview of the restoration and conservation actions that have been undertaken for whitebark pine in this Region. We are also submitting detailed documentation (appendices) and GIS files directly to the Wyoming Ecological Services Field Office. The appendices are cross-referenced in the executive summary. The Rocky Mountain Research Station has collaborated with Region 1 in providing this documentation.

It is clear that whitebark pine is a species in need of active restoration, rather than just protection, for its recovery. Region 1, in collaboration with the Rocky Mountain Research Station and partner organizations, has been actively engaged in the conservation and restoration of whitebark pine for over 20 years. Great strides have been made in restoring the species in many respects, including implementation of prescribed fire and silvicultural treatments, detailed genetic studies, propagation and planting of blister rust-resistant stock, and use of wildland fire for resource benefit. In addition, Region 1 has identified whitebark pine as a major priority in its Integrated Restoration and Protection Strategy. Funding limitations do exist, but Region 1 is strongly committed to the restoration of whitebark pine on the 12 National Forests where it occurs.

Please note that we are compiling additional information and GIS layers that will be submitted as soon as they are available. These data and layers will address such issues as the extent of wildland fire in whitebark pine habitat and the extent of stands where it is dominant.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information for the status review. Personnel from Region 1 and the Rocky Mountain Research Station are available to provide further details as needed. Questions and information requests may be directed initially to Steve Shelly, Regional Botanist (phone 406-329-3041; email sshelly@fs.fed.us).

Sincerely,

for LESLIE A. C. WELDON
Regional Forester

